The
COMMONWEAL

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The People Pick a Lemon

CONGRESS has adjourned until September 14. We submit that this, not excluding the encouraging reports from Sicily, is the best war news we have had in months. And we do not say this in any smart-alecky spirit, or with any intention of discrediting a great democratic institution. In fact, we would fight like wildcats against any attempt to wipe out the American legislature, even for the duration. But the essence of democracy is taking a chance on the people's judgment. And there can be no denying that last November, when the people reached down into the electoral grab-bag, they came up with a veritable lemon.

Let us take, for example, the record of the last week of congressional history before the recess on the one issue of using subsidies to roll back prices in certain categories. However much one may lament the necessity for such a measure, one must admit that it is necessary—painfully necessary. We do not mean that a congressman who is thinking about the chances of the farm lobby defeating him at the next election must admit it. We do not mean that any congressman can admit it if he's the type who would rather see his country defeated in the war and die himself before he would agree to any major statement of policy made by the Roosevelt administration.

No, we mean simply that it must be admitted by any adult, reasonably impartial person who reads the papers and has observed the dangerous and continuing rise of prices, plus the dangerous and continuing demands of labor for wage increases to match that rise, plus the continuing and potentially disastrous outbreak of strikes to force those increases. Such a person sees quite clearly that we are sitting on a highly insecure lid over the boiling pot of hot, molten inflation.

So what does Congress do about this national crisis? To begin with, Congress doesn't even recognize the existence of a crisis. Recognizing, apparently, only the existence of a farm bloc and another bloc which might be called the wreck-the-Administration-at-any-price bloc, Congress sends President Roosevelt a bill to outlaw completely the use of subsidies to roll back prices. On July 2 the President vetoes it emphatically, pointing out some of the platitudes listed above, and on the same day the House fails by 27 votes to override the veto, 154 voting to sustain, 228 to override. On July 6 the Senate votes to give in and approve roll-back subsidies, 32 to 31, then reverses itself and kills them, 33 to 31 and 36 to 28. (But where were the other 32 Senators? The *Congressional Record* will tell you that they were "necessarily absent," but any page boy will also tell you that most of them had already left for their vacations, in what is unquestionably the most outrageous example of "absenteeism" since Pearl Harbor.) According to Senator George of Georgia, leader of the opposition, "subsidies are definitely inflationary," and black is, without the shadow of a doubt, the purest white.

On July 7 the Senate further demonstrated its intelligence and public spirit by raising the price of corn 33 cents over the OPA ceiling, which would in turn have forced up the prices of dairy, poultry and general meat products. So there we were, teetering on the brink of chaos and disaster, and it seems almost a proof of God's protecting hand that Congress could not bring itself to adjourn at that moment. The House—which is the somewhat unattractive hero of the piece—refused to go along with the Senate's suicidal foolery and finally (anything to get out of Washington!) the Senate reversed itself once again 34 to 33, the subsidies went through and everybody went home.

And what are we to conclude from this gruesome, and so nearly fatal, performance of the men whom we, the voters of America, sent to Washington to watch over and promote the public interest? We must conclude, it seems to us, that something was radically wrong with the standards by which we picked our candidates in the primaries and elections of last year. Whether Democrats or Republicans, too many of us either did not vote at all or else handed over our sacred ballot for

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the pottage of a promise that So-and-So would oppose such-and-such a policy or such-and-such a President who happened to annoy us. In short, we got just what we voted for: a predominantly negative, obstructionist Congress.

Crossing a Much-Traveled Sea

NEWS OF Allied landings on Sicily is, as we write, at an indeterminate stage. We know not what heavy resistance or counterattacks will be met by our invaders. Certainly the mountainous terrain of most of the island will make for hard going; if the determination is there on the part of the enemy, how many Bataans can he not develop? If we succeed in seizing Messina, this campaign will turn into one which has had many prototypes in this war. Island fighting is a special kind of fighting in which the defense has little ultimate chance of success if it cannot keep open its sea contact with mainland bases; for reinforcement by air has not yet proved availing against reinforcement by sea.

And so we are in Sicily. How many hundreds of thousands of Americans have come, in the past three-quarters century, from this Greco-Latin island? Perhaps there are as many Sicilians in America (and in the American Army) as there are in Sicily. And almost every Sicilian family must have known what it was to receive letters, and comfort even more substantial, from relatives who had gone to seek their fortune in a land of which the streets were paved with gold. This is a simple fact. It goes beyond politics or nationalism. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of our troops will be able to address the villagers of this or that village, the citizens of this or that town, as "paesani." So these same Americans are on a visit back home. A strange sort of visit. But it puts them in somewhat another light than that of conquering imperialists.

True, this is not yet the real second front. But it is a front, and so far that is about all we can say.

A Fairer Division

WE ARE not at all concerned with people's griping about rationing. We do feel, however, that there has been a certain lack of justice in the stamp system as thus far operated. Everybody gets the same number of blue and red and white stamps. Which means that everybody is entitled to the same quantity of rationed goods and commodities. Yet obviously everybody has not the same needs. Babies don't need the same foods as adults; some trades make you wear out your shoes quicker than others; a coal miner or manual laborer needs more calories than an office worker; and people who eat most of their meals at restaurants now have a distinct edge over those who eat principally at home.

The OPA furthermore reports that the moment a commodity is rationed, people tend to buy all they are allowed to buy, even though their purchases exceed what they ever bought of this particular commodity before it was rationed. Hence the suggestion that rationing should be made to fit human needs seems to us to make a great deal of sense. Admittedly this is a small matter, but it is a matter which can affect both morale and efficiency. Would it not be easy enough to issue food stamps somewhat in the same way as fuel oil stamps are at present allocated? Only adults who are engaged at the heaviest physical labor would get a full ration book; the rest of us would get books with amounts of stamps varied in accordance with our needs.

Bastille Day

Some of us can only approach truth by taking up one point after another, exploring one partial truth after another, polishing one facet of truth and then another: thus in regard to France we have worried about certain nationalist tendencies appearing among the Gaullists, we have worried about the gravitation of certain business and reactionary Frenchmen toward General Giraud, we have worried about what has long appeared an American tendency to slight the gallant French movement of resistance associated with Gaullism, its first expression, we have worried persistently about those men and women and children in France who are neither heroes nor traitors—who endure and suffer. Doubtless our worries will continue and so we shall write week after week on whatever aspect of the situation seems to require analysis. Yet sometimes, when one is asked to speak—not to write—about France, one may be able to say more simply what one feels about France. At New York University, before the School of Education, this is what was said on Bastille Day.

IT SEEMS almost incredible that only a few years ago the 14th of July—like our own 4th of July—was a holiday that you could celebrate if you felt like celebrating it, and not feel much about it if you had anything else at all on your mind. It was that kind of a day in France—even in France, even for the French. Americans traveling in France would not notice it very much. The banks would be closed. It would be a holiday. The flags would be out on the buildings. There would be dancing in the streets in the evening under the paper lanterns, with the orchestra on a stand decorated with flags. In the villages the Mayor would make a speech and if you were in a village the speech would be something that you listened to, standing in the sunlight, in the village square, with the monument to the dead and the statue of the local celebrity, and then you would go to the café and have a drink. Whatever attempt at formality might be made to surround the ceremony would be sure to go wrong. The

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children would be there with the schoolmaster but they would not be in uniform and they would not know how to march. In France only the soldiers marched properly or wanted to march properly. When you went to be a soldier you learned how to march. The French have the right kind of music for marching. But if you were a civilian you did not march. The point of being a civilian was that no one could make you march, no one could make you go where you did not want to go; no one could make you salute. There were no compulsory ceremonies. The French did not like compulsory ceremonies. The 14th of July was not compulsory. If you were writing a bright book to show that on the 14th of July the people of Paris had made a serious mistake then you could keep right on working on your book. There would be no policemen to come and make you listen to the Mayor's speech. But there were few people writing such books. The few there were did not count. Mostly it was like the 4th of July here. Mostly the French were glad that there was a 14th of July to celebrate, mostly they thought that the fall of the Bastille was a symbol for the kind of freedom they were used to; mostly they would not have liked anyone to touch it. Only a few years ago it was like that. It was like a holiday. You listened to a speech or you went fishing. It was not a day for serious thinking.

When a country is a real country you do not spend the national holiday—the 4th or the 14th of July—trying to convince yourself that you are a real citizen of a real country. When a country is free you do not spend a holiday talking about freedom. You enjoy freedom: your own personal freedom. When your country is a real country you are not selfconscious about it. Only a few years ago that is the way it was about the 14th of July in France.

In those years there were people who thought they were the Roman Empire and people who thought that they belonged to the master race. The holidays in their countries were not like the 4th or the 14th of July.

But in France it was a simple holiday, a natural holiday, it was not a threat and if it was indeed a boast, if it was indeed a day of pride, it was the pride of men and their boast that they had created a greater liberty for themselves and that freedom was not something you kept for yourself: it was something that grew stronger when you gave it to others. The French and the Americans were proud that they had created something which would die if locked up in a box but which would grow stronger every time it was given away. The French and the Americans had given a certain meaning to the word citizen in the modern world. The French and the Americans were proud of liberty only when they thought about it. They were too used to it to talk about it very often. They did not talk about it too much even on the days officially set apart for the commemoration of its founding.

That was only a few years ago.

But now it's different. Today it's different. The 14th of July is an entirely different sort of holiday today. In France today there are no speeches at all. The Mayors in the villages are silent. But in France today and in America today and all over the world wherever men have heard of freedom it is the heart which speaks. Men all over the world look today at the calendar—the orders come to troops of the United Nations all over the world with the date written on them—and men think of the word Bastille and of the words Liberty Equality Fraternity and all over the world these things are threatened or lost and are being defended and reconquered step by step and the price that is being paid for them shows what they are worth and all over the world men think today of France and it is their heart which speaks in gratitude to the French.

These words which have come through the course of history to define freedom, these French words resound now in the many languages of mankind. They are spoken by the British and by the Americans in our own English language. The Chinese have sounds that express them. The Russians have them in their language. The Dutch, the Flemish, the Czechs, the Poles, the Greeks have them in their language. The Jews throughout the world who have lost everything hold still these words in their tortured souls. And there are Germans too and Italians who know them.

Today all over the world there is an immense conspiracy of freedom in the hearts of millions of men and in their heroic actions, and today everywhere these men think of France. Never in all history has there been a 14th of July in which so many men in so many lands, in such immense peril, in such firm resolve have turned their hearts toward France. Never in all history have the French been surrounded by such a fraternal solidarity of purpose. Never in all history have the French—broken, imprisoned and indomitable—been able to count so entirely on the friendship of so many men. Today we do not think of the French, of their history, their glory, their present servitude and anguish as we would of some foreign people whom we have admired. We are not planning and acting to bring freedom to some foreign people as a gift. Freedom even now is in France, in the minds and courage of imprisoned Frenchmen. We are hastening to France and we shall not say here is freedom, you thought of it once, you knew it once, you have lost it and we have brought it back to you, but we shall say we have come to share the freedom which is in you, which you have never lost.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Report from Newport News

By J. SANFORD SHANLEY

THE war effort has brought concentrated and deplorably congested living conditions to many sections of the country. Shipyards and the manufacture of implements of war call for large labor crews, and the sites where such work is done cannot be chosen on the basis of whether adequate housing facilities exist. I have recently returned from such an overcrowded district, the lower Chesapeake Bay area in Virginia. Here the HOLC is striving to provide one thousand additional dwelling units.

It would seem, at first glance, that the small towns along the southwestern shore already had more than their share of new housing developments. Row upon row of small detached dwellings line the stark new streets. The surrounding ground has a sparse crop of first year grass, and scrawny trees are just getting their roots into the ground. There are also "garden apartments," rather more pretentious, and in some instances these buildings are delightfully situated right on the bay, with ample lawns and shade. Generous as the supply of various types and grades of new housing may be, all have been occupied the moment the very paint was dry. For most of the incoming workers there has never been an opportunity to live in anything so modern and adequate. Until yesterday there seems to have been a complete cessation of home building for the last thirty-five or forty years. Houses of older vintage are for the most part one family, two story dwellings of from six to ten rooms. They were built on city lots twenty-five feet wide. There is the inevitable front porch facing the street, a small back yard and narrow alleys creating thin walls of light and air between the sides of the buildings and their gaping windows. The fact that no accommodation was provided for an automobile dates these buildings.

The streets are for the most part quiet and shady; indeed the summer air is frequently redolent of blossoming magnolia and while the neighborhood might be described as "built-up," the houses themselves have an air of being ample for one family occupancy. It is easy to picture a normal tranquillity in the midst of Southern leisure. Came the war effort and the quiet streets resounded with the 'round-the-clock bustle of workers. From two to five families now live under one roof. About sixty per cent of these are young couples recently married, and in many instances both husband and wife have a job. After procuring employment, which is the immediate concern, there is little time left for home hunting; so they rent the first available space, and there isn't much choice.

Three rooms to a family is the exception, two the average, but often one room constitutes an apartment. The only bath is shared by all the tenants, and kitchens consist of a variety of improvised cooking surfaces and sinks; starting at the low end with a two-burner gas heater on a packing box and a cold water faucet over a pail.

While the present condition of the houses would indicate that they were originally well constructed (not jerry-built), there has been little money or effort since the initial outlay. Paint, both interior and exterior, has been used sparingly if at all through the years; wallpaper hangs from grimy walls, and the pine floors which started out painted have only a suggestion of the original cover. The rooms for the most part rent unfurnished. The bare essentials are difficult enough to procure. Certainly the second-hand man who deals in beds, tables and chairs has been caressed by the ill wind of war! The five-and-ten can be relied on for the supplemental requirements. One readily movable object which is always present is the framed marriage certificate. It is as though this were the unanimous method of raising sordid surroundings to the dignity of a home.

Hours are long and work arduous, so the flat really becomes just a shelter under which to lay a weary head. Beds are rarely made up, unwashed dishes and cutlery indicate haste, and over a sagging line strung from corner to corner, items of personal laundry dry in the breeze. Often a mother with one or more young children must live in these grim surroundings day after day. Usually a mechanical icebox has been installed to preserve food, and there is the likelihood of elementary order, even though the kitchen and laundry departments are inclined to predominate.

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Most of these migrant war workers frankly hate their surroundings, but usually they seem to have neither the heart nor the energy to do much about it. The summer weather is humid and enervating, so the one escape is to complain of their lot to the nearest neighbor. As one of the visitors from the deep South put it early one afternoon, "I declare I've had company the whole morning long, and haven't gotten around to picking up a thing." Practically all will admit that the pay is good; but not having been able to find clean quarters at the beginning, they are loath to spend their earnings to alleviate the squalor. Surprisingly little time or money is spent on entertainment. The radio, of course, and an occasional movie topped off by a beer.

One bright youth from Texas, an electrician, living in three rooms with a pretty, expectant wife met the situation squarely. Their rooms were on the second floor of one of a row of four

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identical six-room houses. In each case two families occupied the house, but for the most part the other families were somewhat larger. The houses presented quite a neat appearance from the outside, but inside the usual bare, ill-kempt scene prevailed. The young electrician, however, urged by an instinct to have things right, had cleaned, scraped and painted every square foot of wall, ceiling and floor. Freshly laundered curtains hung at all the windows. Here was a refreshing air of accomplishment.

Then there was the wan young bride, not a worker but rather a lily of the field. She opened the door of a shabby second floor back, and explained they were just "camping." Her only apparent occupation was reading trash, and there was a goodly supply of it on hand. One late number lay open, face down, on the bed, next to the imprint left by her lately reclining figure. The husband—a dour, thick-set riveter with closely cropped hair, came in presently from the night shift. He evinced mild interest in the contemplated improvement of the house, but was particularly concerned as to how much the rent would be raised. He complained his pay wasn't enough to make up for the hard work and long hours. While measuring up the adjoining apartment I could not help overhear this chap denouncing his wife: "I'll be having to make you learn to appreciate me; me working hard day and night . . . with nothing from you outside sour looks and griping!" Not so happy a picture, but understandable. Had the lady taken to work, she would have had less time to succumb to her surroundings.

There isn't anything so unusual in people living in overcrowded slums. Thousands share that plight in every large city. But somehow these particular people did not seem to belong where they were. It is rather a case of a job having to be done, and of their being willing to put up with almost anything until it is accomplished. The money they make is good and acceptable, but it is not the chief consideration.

The Federal Government, through the agency of the Home Owners Loan Corporation, plans to rectify the wretched conditions under which so many live. Even after the initial steps, which involve much red tape, builders and their materials will be hard to get. Perhaps like many other hard things, this seemingly impossible task will be accomplished. In the meantime there are a lot of brave young people who deserve praise for playing a thoroughly unglamourous part in the war effort.

Confederation of the Americas

How the continents truly are a melting-pot

***By* Clarence Finlayson**

THE WAR has sharply revealed the future of the Americas. On few other occasions has the immediate future of the Western Hemisphere so suddenly been made clear. Today, in 1943, four centuries after the discovery of America by Columbus, its second discovery begins to take solid form: the discovery of its political and cultural relationship to the rest of the world.

The first factor that is already in operation is the displacement of culture from Europe to the Americas. In Latin America European culture has been absorbed more slowly, and perhaps for that very reason more in accordance with European temperament and peculiarities; while in North America European culture is an element which still is viewed as foreign, in spite of the European racial strains already in existence on this continent. Nevertheless, largely due to the war and the isolation it has brought, there is a large intellectual interchange between the two Americas that little by little is shaping a new world. The new conception of politics, for instance, with its democratic structure and its emphasis on freedom, has to be brought into being forcibly in South America. This new democracy will have social characteristics which by extending the benefits of the community to the individual will support new pillars of freedom, based on the concept of the human person.

In the course of history we have always believed in fighting for certain ideas that ultimately turned out differently when the war was over. War, like every revolutionary phenomenon, has ended in uncovering new possibilities, new pathways that led the destinies of the world in directions quite different from those conceived of at the beginning.

We must not forget that Latin America had its "French Revolution" (in the war of independence which separated her from Spain) but with this essential difference: that Latin America had no middle class. The transformation has

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been slow, very slow, and accompanied by long years of revolutions and instability. It is only now, and on a very small scale, that the first freedoms of Latin America's "French Revolution" are beginning to be realized. We remain a semi-feudal civilization. The change, more rapid since 1920, has imparted a special rhythm to socio-economic problems in Latin America. The capitalistic régime, which is in danger everywhere, will endure in its essential elements in North America, and reaching out to the southern continent, which is still semi-feudal, will continue its existence there in a sort of final manifestation, with its last breath.

The United States has urgent need of Latin America. Economically, then, there will be close cooperation between the two Americas. What kind of cooperation will there be? I believe that it will be a confederation of the Americas under the hegemony of the United States. And it cannot be otherwise. The first step will be the abolition of tariff barriers. That will allow a free interchange of products, will supply economic and commercial stability and soon will manifest the self-sufficiency of the Americas taken as a whole.

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In the reconstruction of the world, and especially of Europe, not only the United States must take part. A large rôle will belong to Latin America. And in order to keep up an adequate balance between consumption and production, both the United States and Latin America will have to work together, with Latin America having the principal rôle in supplying raw materials for the world economy. I also believe that the United States will move industrially toward the south, setting up industries in the Latin American countries themselves, with some collaboration on the part of their own governments. I do not believe that the large American companies will operate on our continent in the same unrestricted manner as they have up to now. Supervision will be imposed by their own government, so that they will collaborate with the countries in which they are working. And they will not meddle in politics. It must be realized that only permanent commercial and economic relations will do.

Today throughout the world there is a crisis of faith, a crisis which, like all other phenomena that go against nature, will not last long. Present day man has excluded God from his life, and that constitutes an unhappy portent of tremendous consequence. In order to fill such a void—and to do so very superficially—present day man turns today to the State. That is the entity which tends to take the place of God. Man thus chains himself more and more to the material and darker tendencies of the world. In itself a planned economy is a real factor for progress; it obeys and represents a human ideal, but a planned economy with merely statist objectives, or with a human conception of man which is egocentric, is one of the worst evils that can be conceived. In such a system the dictators appear as representatives of the Godhead, as His prophets, as His official voice.

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In large part it is in a continental conception of politics that lies the future of the Americas. That will bring about a complete suppression of the totalitarian views now held. Nationalism, which is a successor in a certain sense to feudal régimes, will disappear. Haya de la Torre has said: "No country is an island; we must learn to think in a continental sense." That is the new reality: the confederation of the Americas that will receive for itself the heritage, which is still universal, of Europe.

It is interesting and exceedingly curious to observe the way in which the American Continent expresses in every sense the new future of the world. In the first place, the Americas have realized historically the transcendental fact and the world function of constituting the center for the migration of peoples and races in its final stage. The theory is now accepted by nearly all the ethnologists and anthropologists that the American Indians came from Asia. From that continent there appear to have gone forth two major currents of world migration; while some peoples traversed Asia ever moving toward the east, the others traveled toward Europe and Africa, toward the west. The first to discover America were Asiatics who probably crossed the Behring Strait and later spread widely throughout the new territories. But it was only in 1492 that the peoples of Europe moved further west and also reached America. It was Christopher Columbus who started this great westward migration, and it was he who really discovered a new world for Europe, because the Scandinavian and other navigators who had made earlier voyages to America never widely spread the great news. And so in 1492 the two great currents of migration moving around the globe were joined at last.

That basic historical fact indicates in a broad way the destiny of the Americas: they represent the center of a movement of peoples and races that come together from the farthest reaches and by this contact are revitalized and create a New World. The Americas are called to be the meeting ground of all the continents, east and west. Today America is being born in the splendor of her destiny.

It is not mere chance that the United States in solidarity with the rest of the Americas wages war in two areas that are a world apart, in the east and in the west. Against forces of destruction that threatened and still threaten to destroy the

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great values of culture and civilization in Europe as in Asia, America appears on the stage of history as the defender of the world. That defense will logically and inevitably bring her, in the near and almost immediate future, the heritage of the great cultural and civilizing values which in a truly human environment, proudly and in freedom, will develop to a degree which we cannot even envision.

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After the war we shall have to create a series of permanent organizations which have for their purpose united action throughout the Americas. The following, for instance, would be most useful:

1. An inter-American bank, located in Washington, with branches in the capitals of all the other countries.
2. A development corporation whose purpose is to promote and expand industry, business and agriculture through joint action in all the countries of the Americas.
3. An economic congress with jurisdiction for the whole continent to draw up legislation.
4. A confederation or corporation of labor and another of capital maintaining relations between the two and headed by a common directive body.
5. A department of public health devoted to securing adequate diet for the poorer classes, particularly in Latin America, wherever underprivileged groups cannot sustain themselves as they should. Also to engage in such related activities as the struggle against epidemics, illnesses, etc.
6. A political congress with its seat in Washington and representatives from all the Americas in number proportionate to the population of the different countries. (That is an idea which is still remote but that some day will be realized.)

Latin America will be organized in its turn into regional groupings which will play their rôle within the larger confederation. The following confederations will be set up:

1. Confederation of the countries of the Plata Basin (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay).
2. Of the Pacific (Chile, Peru and Bolivia).
3. Greater Colombia (Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador).
4. For the Antilles (Cuba, etc.).
5. Mexico and Central America.
6. Brazil.

The Panama Canal should be internationalized. The United States must realize that that is the only way she can count on spontaneous and sincere rapprochement and the unshakable solidarity of Latin America. America, that vast, sparsely populated continent, must foster the policy of the open door for all the peoples of the world, especially for those of Europe to which we are bound by so many filial ties.

Latin America needs particularly to achieve homogeneity. Those races which are purely indigenous must now be aided considerably. We must not forget that they were the original inhabitants of these lands. Frequently, and almost universally, they have been in a wretched condition, enduring the abuse and exploitation of the whites. In this sense, and making all the necessary reservations, the Aprista movement has been useful in opening our eyes to the great problem of the Indian. The Mexican Revolution has also provided a new perspective on the Indian. Common education with the white man and genuine economic, social and spiritual aid are required by all the canons of justice. In large measure the inferior living conditions of the Indian, the Mestizo and the peasants (Latin America is essentially agricultural) comes from the hacienda system derived from the ancient "encomiendas" of colonial times. Such a system should not and cannot continue in the modern world. It is that semi-feudal, colonial structure which renders all the Latin American countries obviously inferior and unequal to the United States and Europe.

Fostering immigration from abroad is an immediate means of enriching America. We must open our doors to Europe. That will enable us to improve the race and achieve real progress. America has no cause to fear over-population. The Americas have the vastest material reserves in the world. There is no legitimate motive for being fearful for the future. On the contrary, today more than ever before, considering the decline of Europe, America constitutes the future of the world. Without the slightest political implications of any kind, it is my opinion that the coming age is the age of the Americas. And so we are witnessing the birth of a new civilization, a new world culture. America is beginning to establish herself as the center and the beginning of a new world. In 1492 the two currents of migration that had traversed the globe grasped hands in America. Today, after four centuries, their voice is finally being heard.

A Change of Subject

Let's talk about some unpretentious things:
A sea-shell which a mile of wave sweeps over,
Or one small star which over the sunset's wings
Chooses to play the part of silver rover.

Or things almost invisible like the swift
Furrow that Gabriel made through silken air,
Down to Our Lady. Few could see the rift,
And first it was, and then it was not there.

Or things that are still more delicate like the hand
Which deft, adroitly unrolled the winding sheet
From an inconspicuous man in a far land
And set a dead man, Lazarus, on his feet.

Or things that are spare and slender. Take the gold
And tapering horn of Saint Michael. All it can do
Is bring the world's end, shake from heaven's stronghold
Ten million stars, and split the earth in two.

DANIEL SARGENT.

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Hot Winds in Dakota

A bad wheat year and a few sheep

By T. D. Lyons

ON MARCH 21, in Redstone, we celebrated the advent of official spring by opening up the "flat-house" to begin cleaning wheat for seeding. The "flat-house" had been constructed by my father for use in the grain buying business before the "dump-elevator" had been invented. My father frequently remarked, for our encouragement in the strenuous heavy labor of wheeling the big twelve-bushel barrow from the bin to the fanning-mill, that the self-binder and the dump-elevator had taken all the drudgery out of wheat raising. He recalled the days when he and Mike Donlan and John Windedahl had the job of loading a thousand bushels a day into a freight car from the "flat-house" by arm-and-back power. Now our labors were reduced to handling only about six thousand bushels which it was necessary to run through the fanning-mill to clean out the mustard seed, weed seeds and small defective wheat berries which made "screenings," good only for chicken feed.

The "spring" day on which we started had a temperature of twenty below zero, but it was clear and bright with a brilliant sun; there was almost no snow on the ground—it had been an open winter—and my father was anxious to get the seed wheat cleaned and hauled out to the big place while the roads were still passable. We all knew that an April blizzard about the middle of the month was a possibility and we were anxious to get the wheat seeding over before that event, because a blanket of snow on the newly seeded wheat would almost guarantee a prosperous wheat plant and plenty of luxuriant "stools." Hauling the seed wheat out to the Big Place became something of a problem when we got down to the last thousand bushels. The weather had turned warm and we had a big March rain; every night the thermometer would go down to about zero and all the next forenoon the roads were merely ruts filled with water and melting ice. We did not attempt to haul a bigger load than thirty bushels, although our wagons had a capacity of eighty-seven bushels each and on good roads the big Percherons could handle the capacity load without trouble. To our surprise April came in warm and mild and on the fourth day of April we were engaged full-blast in wheat-seeding. We finished seeding about the seventeenth of April and my father thought that we were in great luck because that very night there was a three-inch downpour of cold rain and the next morning all the ruts had ice in them.

My father explained that the little freeze did not hurt a thing and that the wheat and the soil would be the better for it. That day the wild geese gave us a great orchestral salute from high in the sky and that night Steve Archimbault slept out in an improvised thicket in the clump of willows near the school section and came in about 4:30 A. M. with two fine fat wild geese. In about ten days the wheat fields began to be green, the weather was warm and mild and there was a gentle "never-resting prairie wind" blowing day and night, which made the wheat plants grow rapidly. By May 1, when we started corn planting, my father began to show signs of worry and told George Davidson that it was getting "terrible" dry. However, about May 12, a storm came up very suddenly and an inch and three-quarters of rain fell in an hour. This did not serve to restore my father's equanimity as he recalled that the spring of '79 was very much similar and the crop was short by reason of drought. He recalled also that a violent rainstorm ran off the surface and did not soak into the sub-soil. However, the corn came up looking green and prosperous and the wheat crop seemed to make a fairly good growth, although it was plain that the dry spell had injured it.

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The same gentle warm prairie breeze continued to blow, although now every afternoon the wind became somewhat stronger and finally about June 20 began to blow constantly from the southwest. Two days later my father said with a grim expression, "This is a regular Dakota hot wind and if we don't get rain in a week the wheat stand, short as the stalks are, will begin to head." The wind continued both day and night from the southwest and even an hour after sundown it had sufficient of a burning quality to be uncomfortable. On June twenty-seventh the wheat headed, although the stalks were only a few inches high. My father still did not give up hope. He said, "About '81 we had a condition like this, but we got a big rain on the twenty-ninth of June and the crop went twenty bushels to the acre of number one wheat weighing sixty-three pounds to the bushel,

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although the straw was so short that we had to cut some of the grain with the mower."

But alas for human hopes—the wind held steadily in the southwest and the burning quality was very perceptible now two hours after sundown. My father looked drawn and worried. My poor mother asked him, "Dick, do you think the hot wind is withering the crops, especially the corn?" My father answered, "Sarah, I don't know for certain yet whether it is withering the corn, but I feel as if tonight it is withering my heart." We were all silent and mournful because it was a new experience to see my father lose his optimism and admit it. However, the next day he was in more cheerful spirits and after a conference with George Davidson said that he thought the wheat would probably go seven bushels to the acre of No. 2. After all this was better than a total loss. On July nineteenth, we started cutting the crop. We did not attempt to use the binders because the stalks were so short, but started in with a single header, thinking that there was enough straw to make heading feasible. At noon, however, my father shut down the heading operations and we started cutting the grain with mowers and raked it up as we did the prairie hay. The straw, the heads and the entire plant visible to the eye was bleached and desolate looking. Hamlin Garland wrote that "he loved the gold of newly shaven stubble, rolled a royal carpet toward the sun fit to be the pathway of a Deity." The white bleached stubble that we saw had a hot discouraged look and whenever I hear of somebody talking about the fields "white with harvest" I still recall the bleached drought-stricken swath that the mower left.

Nature was certainly perverse, that year. We had no sooner got the hay rake and the "bucker" back in the machine shed after stacking the cut grain than a great wet spell started. It rained every day for three weeks and a total of twenty inches of water fell. The wheat stacks were soaked and flooded and when the weather turned warm they began to sprout. The mowing, raking and stacking had shelled at least half of the berries and the six sections were soon covered with a rank luxuriant growth of what Steve Archimbault called "self-seeded wheat." The moisture and the warm weather gave this crop a great stand, although of course there was no possibility that it could mature before frost. The pasture and hay land sections also sprouted a tremendous grass crop and the blue joint again made a beautiful sight waving in the wind almost as high as the shoulders of a horse. George Davidson urged my father to endeavor to make some use of this great plant growth. My father, however, seemed for once to lack initiative and could not get his mind off the ruined stacks of wheat which he had estimated at only a seven-bushel-to-the-acre crop at best, but about August fifteenth, his birthday, he reached a momentous decision and told George Davidson that the stacks were not worth threshing and that if any plan could be figured out for utilizing them and the great growth of green wheat and grass that he would endeavor to finance it.

After several nights of earnest debate, Steve Archimbault told my father that he believed that about six hundred May lambs could be purchased in the Bad Lands, that these lambs could graze on the wheat fields and eat the stacks and that by Thanksgiving they could be sold in Omaha at a good profit. "Well," my father said, "all I know about the sheep business is what I heard from my friends around Miles City who had big cattle herds. The worst plague they could put upon a man was to wish that he might die a 'sheepman.' However, I do not share that prejudice, and you might as well take twenty-five teams and header boxes and hay racks and drive over to Ree Heights and see what you can do."

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To my great delight I was permitted to go along as a teamster under Steve's command. In due time we stopped at a big stockade near the Missouri River where Steve's uncle Jean Crebassa lived and for the next ten days we were engaged in finding and loading May lambs. I left with Steve on the last load. After I became well acquainted with Uncle Jean, he told me some of the tales of the Missouri River which his father, Toussaint Crebassa, had passed on to him. One that he enjoyed enormously was his story of old Fort Union at the confluence of the Yellowstone and the Missouri. He said that the ruins of the house of the Bourgeois were still standing. I was greatly mystified at this until he explained that in the days of the fur-traders, the Bourgeois was the big boss or big chief and that he had power of life and death over his company of voyageurs. The legend was, he said, that the greatest Bourgeois who ever lived was not a Frenchman, but was Manuel Lisa, the Spaniard, and that the French admitted that Lisa was as much of an iron man as Frontenac or LaSalle or La Verendrye. He told the tale of McClellan, a real wilderness man, who had been one of Mad Anthony Wayne's runners and who had vowed to kill Manuel Lisa if he ever met him on the Missouri above the Rivière St. Jacques (the James River which flows into the Missouri). However, when Lisa came up the river, a few years after the Lewis and Clark expedition, McClellan had his chance, but there was something so awe-striking and authoritative in the air and look of the big Bourgeois that McClellan was intimidated.

We reached the Big Place with most of the lambs in good condition and from August to

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Thanksgiving Day they had a great feast of wheat stacks and green growing wheat and luxuriant prairie pasture of bluestem. By December first, they had been sold in Omaha, at a profit of two dollars and a half per head. The next spring, Mr. Cyrus Clark, the proprietor of the Palmer House at Redstone, took up with my father, apparently in a serious way, the matter of sheep culture. He knew that the venture had proved somewhat disappointing and that the sheep had cropped the school section so close that even the hardy buffalo grass was a poor stand. He recalled the warning of a former Commissioner of Immigration to the effect that Dakota was an uncertain proposition as a farming country by reason of occasional shortage of moisture. My father had, however, recovered his spirits and his optimism and immediately came to the defense of that great region with the eloquence of an almost infatuated lover. They were standing out under the maple trees in front of the Palmer House and as they talked a covered wagon drawn by three lean, emaciated, stumbling horses drove up. Mr. Clark said, "Another bonanza wheat farmer who has gone broke in this great Dakota of yours, Richard, is heading back to Missouri, to live on his wife's relations." Mr. Clark then called out to the man who had descended from the driver's seat in the covered wagon the customary Dakota salutation, "Stranger, where you heading for?"

The stranger evidently thought that he had trouble enough without being cross-examined, and no doubt he had become somewhat irritable due to constant repetition of the same question by every person he met, so his answer was delivered in a somewhat surly manner. He said, "Headin' for Hell, I reckon."

Mr. Clark took no offense at all at what was plainly intended to be a disagreeable reply.

Instead he said, with a large, benevolent gesture of his arm, "Drive right into the feed yard, Stranger. You're there."

Communications

ETHIOPIA

Jacksonville, Florida.

TO the Editors: "Wasn't the Ethiopian massacre publicly approved by the Italian episcopate?" This passage which I quote from the letter signed by Isabel L. Lynch (THE COMMONWEAL, June 25) is too general and misleading. Several Italian bishops, many if you like, *but not the Italian episcopate,* made personal manifestations in favor of the Ethiopian war, because they believed that it was a just war and also helpful for Christian civilization. Their belief was not correct; this does not mean that they *approved the Ethiopian massacre.*

In such a matter it is necessary to have accurateness as well as discretion. For a reader who does not know me I must add that I have always fought Fascism since its beginning (1919) without hesitation, and have denounced, too, certain complacencies of Catholics, priests and bishops, not only in Italy but elsewhere, towards Fascism. Whoever may care to know more completely my ideas on the Ethiopian war, and on the stand taken by Italian and other clergies at that time, can consult my book "Church and State" (Longmans), especially Chapter XIV.

LUIGI STURZO.

THANKS

TO the Editors: I am anxious that the readers of your review know the splendid service you are performing for the men of my ship. We are outside the continental limits, and in no position to keep abreast of current literature at a time when our men have had more opportunity and desire to read than ever before. It would be impossible for us to make any intelligent selection of books for our library, which is one of the most popular features of the ship. So every month, the Welfare Fund sends a check for $50.00 to THE COMMONWEAL, and the editors mail us books to that amount from current reading lists. We began this as an experiment, but its success has exceeded our expectations. Our men have a wide range of tastes; yet the editors seem to have understood their needs, and have sent us material that is both good and popular. We advertise each consignment as it arrives, and there is immediately a rush to get on the list or to reserve some favorite. In a very tangible way, THE COMMONWEAL is aiding our boys in the things of the spirit.

Beyond this, I am personally grateful for your issues. THE COMMONWEAL is more valuable to me than ever before, for it keeps me informed, better than any other vehicle, in those areas that are of deepest significance. Each week, after reading my copy, I place it in the officers' wardroom, and I have found that it is the only bridge we possess to reach the secularized American mind. Recently when our officers drew up a list of magazines they wished to obtain, they included THE COMMONWEAL, a striking testimony of its power to reach a segment of our reading public that would otherwise be untouched by things Catholic.

LIEUT. J. N. MOODY,
Chaplain, USNR.

The Screen

Rain! No Game!

OF COURSE all the extraordinary Negro talent gathered for *"Stormy Weather"* cannot be blamed for the picture's being such a fizzle. Bill Robinson dances, Lena Horne sings and looks beautiful, Fats Waller thumps out wonderful rhythms on a piano, Ada Brown sings and glows with exuberance, Katherine Dunham and her troupe do a very arty dance into the title song and Cab Calloway and his band are very much in the groove. The film's weakness is its routine plot, the kind of pointless fluff we have been seeing during the past years with Alice Faye or Betty Grable. Vaguely based on the life of Bill Robinson, it tells the story of a dancer named Bill

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Williamson as he rises to the top of the entertainment field. Much of it is told in flashbacks and the story covers some twenty years after 1918, a period during which the principals age no more than Don Ameche does in any of his musical lives. As Bill dances his way to fame after the last war, he is aided by his buddy (Dooley Wilson playing comedy relief) and his most ardent admirer (luscious Lena Horne) who refuses to marry him until the finale. On this thin outline of a story are hung Hollywood's usual over-elaborate musical numbers which are built around some top-notch old songs and are staged with more extravagance than good taste. "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Diga, Diga Do," "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby," and "Stormy Weather" are first-rate songs that this cast should have made into first-rate entertainment. To the producers' credit, it must be said that the film does not treat the Negroes as children even though it does little to boost their position as our most gifted entertainers. Perhaps Producer William LeBaron and Director Andrew Stone should have been confined to a small budget. The picture's high point relies neither on the splendor of a million dollar set nor on any of the name-stars mentioned; it is due to the superb dancing of the Nicholas Brothers in one scene.

In the mad rush of new feature films and timely newsreels these days, one is apt to overlook the shorts. This is unfortunate for many of them are handled well and deserve attention. Here are a few from the recent crop that merit your consideration. March of Time's *"Show Business at War"* is an interesting piece of straight cinema reportage without this company's usual editorial style. While it lays greatest emphasis on what the Hollywood folk are doing to aid the war effort, it also shows the contributions from the theatrical and radio professions. This short gives a lively summary of the drives, canteen work and personal appearances of these show people, most of whom contribute their time and talent without salary. . . . The latest item in the This Is America series is called *"Lieutenant Smith"* and reveals the training of an officer's candidate at Fort Benning. Slavko Vorkapich, who directed, succeeds in making us understand the severity of the routine as we watch Private First Class John Smith (played by William Terry who was the engaging draftee in this company's excellent short last year) go through his paces to become a second lieutenant. Especially interesting are the scenes stressing the attention paid to personalities of the candidates as well as their conduct on drills and maneuvers. . . . Even more rigid is the conditioning portrayed in *"Wings Up."* This OWI short takes us to the Army Air Force Officers Candidate School in Miami, Florida. As Clark Gable reads the commentary, we are shown the concentrated course and we learn why it must be so rugged. The regulations and discipline may seem overly strict until one realizes the number of lives that depend on a flying officer's precision and ability "to take it." Both "Wings Up" and "Lieutenant Smith" do an excellent propaganda job to increase a civilian's respect for army officers. . . . Also from the OWI Film Unit comes *"War Town,"* a first-rate picture illustrating the changes that took place in Mobile, Alabama, when 150,000 defense workers descended on it without too much warning. In effective cinema, aided by a nicely written script and a good musical score, this short deals mainly with housing and health problems. The increase in efficiency in the shipyards alone when the workers were provided with decent housing, adequate transportation and medical care should provide a lesson that other cities might well note now and keep in mind in peace times. . . . One war-related short that is a delight is *"A Letter from Ireland."* In a friendly and informal manner it tells about two brothers who are American soldiers in a camp in Northern Ireland. Since the boys have been negligent about writing home, their officer commands them to write; so they tell about their experiences since they landed. Because of the script's sense of humor and Brian Desmond Hurst's unpretentious direction, the film has great charm and does more to establish good Anglo-American feeling than many of the more ballyhooed gestures. The picture was made in Ireland, no doubt with just that intention in mind. In any case, you'll enjoy watching these two typically American boys and their reactions to foreign places and people. . . . And then there's one completely escapist item that is worth some extra effort to hunt up. *"The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins"* is one of the best shorts made with puppets I have seen. George Pal's Madcap Models are the actors; and with silly grins on their faces they enact Dr. Seuss's story about little Bartholomew who decided to see what would happen if he wouldn't remove his hat for the King. The King insists. But every time Bart takes off his hat, a new one appears on his head. And such hats! George Pal has designed this pleasant nonsense with imagination and appropriate light-hearted sense of fantasy and fun.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

On Mexico

By HARRY SYLVESTER

NOT many books written this year or even next will be more valuable than Miss Brenner's on the Mexican Revolution,* not only to anyone interested in the fact that he is an American, but to anyone interested also in the fact that he may be a Catholic. Mexico is the Catholic nation geographically nearest to the United States. It is also—and has been for decades—the most politically confused country on the earth. Anyone going down there to write about it could find almost anything he wanted to find, and there would actually be a good deal of truth in it. In 1937, Josephus Daniels, our ambassador at the time, told me in Mexico City that if I wanted to write about Mexico, to do so then, because the longer a person remained in that country the less he knew about it. I thought the old man was being characteristically fatuous, but succeeding visits proved him to be right. It is a kind of optical illusion, though. It is not that one knows less

* The Wind That Swept Mexico. The History of the Mexican Revolution 1910-1942. Text by Anita Brenner. 184 Historical Photographs assembled by George R. Leighton. Harper. $3.75.

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of Mexico the longer one stays there, so much as that one learns how much one does not know about the country, and this knowledge of one's ignorance increases at a greater rate than one's actual knowledge of the place.

For decades now we have become accustomed to the wildest kinds of conflicting reports coming out of Mexico. At times reactionaries and communists not only seemed to be marching arm and arm in friendship or something else, but actually were. The country and the people not only seemed to be paradoxes; they were paradoxes. To the more orderly American and English minds, the place seemed hopelessly confused, and even minds as fine as Evelyn Waugh's and Graham Greene's failed to see that there can be an order and a logic that is not that of their own race and country, that actually seems something else.

Anita Brenner is an anthropologist and George Leighton, who compiled the remarkable photographs of this book, also appears to be one. Out of a knowledge as deep as any non-Mexican's that I know of, and a real liking for the country, Miss Brenner has performed the thoroughly remarkable feat of telling the story of the Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910 in all its contradictions and paradoxes, indicating clearly the slow, zigzag course upward of a persecuted and illiterate people. Mr. Leighton has compiled the photographic record which makes up more than half the book, and the 184 pictures lend a depth and reality to Miss Brenner's brief text that could otherwise be found only in the work of the greatest novelists.

Miss Brenner is, for the most part, quite objective. Although her sympathies are toward the Left—she seems to be a Trotskyist—she knows that Mexican Leftists have done some very strange and terrible things and have not been above betraying the Revolution. She records their betrayals, usually without comment, letting the implications speak for themselves. Her objectivity leaves her only when she writes of the Church. She does not like the Church nor anything about it. Her dislike of it commands respect, for she is neither a semi-literate like Miss Betty Kirk, nor does she go into a white and shuddering rage as does Katharine Anne Porter at the mention of the word Catholic; both being lady Leftists who have written about Mexico and the Church.

The truth is that the Church had much to answer for in Mexico as it had in Spain, but to proceed on the blithe assumption, as Miss Brenner does, that at no time has the Church been other than consciously and theologically malicious, is to lie, and disregard verifiable facts. Her dislike of the Church leads her into at least two inconsistencies and at least one grave error of fact. On pages 92 and 93 she mentions that one of the things about Camacho when he ran for president was that he "was known as a good Catholic," but that "none of these were good talking points for the majority of the Mexican public." Then on page 94 she writes that one of the best arguments of totalitarians in Mexico just before the war in their effort to win Axis sympathizers, was: "You have nothing to fear from anyone but the United States, which is a Protestant, irreligious country seeking to destroy Mexican tradition, and to assimilate Mexico for the benefit of Wall Street." This is what used to be known as playing both ends against the middle, before communist and fascist obscurantist technique in the 30's made it quite the thing.

Then, on page 91, she writes, cheaply: "*Even* the Archbishop (Luis Martinez), *sensing the quality of popular feeling,* declared that it was the patriotic duty of all Mexicans to support their government." (Regarding the popular oil expropriations.) But practically reverses herself on page 98, writing (regarding the war): ". . . Archbishop Luis Martinez, *whose friendliness to the government* is not shared by the majority of the clergy or the devout upper class, found it necessary to declare that it was the duty of all good Catholics to support their government." (All italics mine.)

It is unpleasant and sad to find Miss Brenner indulging in such cheap inconsistency, and it makes one suspicious of other parts of her book. Although it may be due merely to her quite incomplete knowledge of Mexican Catholicism, which is a strange phenomenon at best! Political church-haters die yelling for the priest, who usually manages to arrive in time; men who fight the Church in Congress go to Sunday Mass; and Vicente Lombardo Toledano's daughters are secretly attending a convent school. Miss Brenner has my full permission to chew on this last one for as long as she likes.

Which brings us to the error of fact, one which I am able to testify to through personal experience, although Miss Brenner knows Mexico much better than I ever expect to. Miss Brenner, like most good writers, is, when she wants to be, quite adept at the use of the weasel-word. On page 91 she writes: "Cedillo, a revolutionary chief who had become a feudal lord in San Luis Potosi, with his private chapel, private army, and even a little air force, proclaimed a crusade to defend religion, land and the sacred rights of property from the atheistic bolshevistic government."

The weasel-words in that sentence are "his private chapel." Thus, without saying that Cedillo was a Catholic, Miss Brenner makes the very strong implication that he was one and very well-thought of, too, by the Church, else how come the private chapel. Well, Cedillo was not a Catholic. At about the time he was proclaiming his crusade, myself and Bill Callahan, former managing editor of the *Catholic Worker,* were in Cedillo's stronghold at Las Palomas and under constant if polite guard for the 24 hours we were there. And one of the questions I asked Cedillo in the interview was whether or not he was a Catholic. He was not a Catholic, he told us. It was probably one of the few truths he spoke that day. From other sources, I found out why he was so seemingly friendly to the Church when thousands of people had seen the newsreel two years before, in 1936, of him leading an agrarian group in an anti-Church march. (Miss Brenner and Mr. Leighton somehow missed out on a picture of that one, although they include much rarer ones in their book.) Cedillo was seemingly friendly to the Church for either or both of two reasons: (1) He hoped for Catholic support in any military and/or political campaign he might begin. (2) He had supposedly made his mother a death-bed promise not to persecute the Church.

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Finally, I do not think that Miss Brenner's judgment on the Sinarquistas is either final or authentic. She sees them as "semi-fascists" if not outright fascists. Their real trouble and danger is that they are not altogether sure what they are other than very pro-Mexican and (incredibly) non-violent.

In spite of these things, this book is the best ever written about the Mexican revolution. Someone, perhaps Miss Brenner herself, will some day write a more fully detailed one, but it would be thoroughly impossible to compile a better photographic record than has Mr. Leighton. It is all here: the wives and children of Villa's men keeping house on the roofs of freight cars as they followed their husbands and fathers virtually into battle; Obregon (he and Francisco I. Madero and Cardenas show best and most honest in Miss Brenner's narrative), five minutes before he was assassinated; a *Cristero* before the firing squad; the snipers at Ciudad Juarez; Cardenas as an armed 15-year-old revolutionary; the dead in the streets; a quite horrible picture of Archbishop Pascual Diaz; a pleasant one of Archbishop Luis Martinez; and John L. Lewis addressing Toledano's then Communist controlled labor federation.

Editors' Choice

COAL DUST OF THE FIDDLE. *George Korson. Pennsylvania.* $3.50.

TENANTS OF THE ALMIGHTY. *Arthur Raper. Macmillan.* $3.50.

How Did They Get That Way?

THIS July 8, more than two weeks after Lewis had ordered them back to work, there were 13,000 miners still on strike in the California-Brownsville area near Pittsburgh, still crippling production of coking coal, which is vital to steel production. They didn't have the chance of the proverbial snowball of winning, or even of proving anything beyond their own orneriness. So why did they do it? And how did they get that way? For a book mostly concerned with soft-coal miners' minstrelsy, George Korson's "Coal Dust on the Fiddle" gives you a surprising number of clues to the solution.

And the New York *Times* of July 9 comes up with another clue in its story on the coal strikers: "In the past few days pickets have been recruiting women, whose cries of 'scab' have been effective in turning away men bent on going to work. It is an old picketing trick that has been employed in the highly unionized Pittsburgh district for years."

And Korson's book puts the clues together and tells you, in poetry and prose, just how powerful the cry of "scab" can be to a soft-coal miner. Take the pathetic ballad, "A Scab's Wife," sung by the miners of West Virginia:

> When he was a union man,
> Scabbing was his crave;
> Now he is scabbing,
> And he's troubled to his grave.
>
> Lord, I wish he was a union man again.
>
> Got no shoes on my feet,
> Got no hat on my head;
> My husband he is scabbing,
> Oh, I wish that he was dead .

Or take another West Virginia ballad, the even more pathetic "John L. Lewis Blues":

> Union, take me back, got the John L. Lewis blues,
> Please now take me back, I need a new hat and shoes,
> The operators told me if I'd listen to them
> I'd always be eatin' fried eggs and ham.
>
> Union, take me back, got the John L. Lewis blues.

But actually, it would have been impossible for the word "scab" to take on that full, rich flavor of horror and disgust for soft-coal miners unless there had been, on the other hand, a positive devotion to the union and the whole union tradition. Such a devotion does exist among them, a devotion passionate and even semi-religious in its intensity, and a devotion that is quite separate from any feeling they may or may not have for the person of John L. Lewis or any other leader. There are several reasons for this, among them the peculiar isolation and unity of mining communities, but the main reason is the perfectly simple one that they still remember so vividly the appalling conditions under which they have lived and worked, or not worked and died, for so much of the history of coal mining in this country. And they remember too that in nearly every case it has been the union (with an assist from FDR) that has been responsible for the improvement of those conditions.

In "Coal Dust on the Fiddle" Mr. Korson details, between his ballads and songs, some of the more prominent disasters in that history. For example, there was the Cherry Fire in 1909 when nearly 300 Illinois miners were burned alive or suffocated from coal damp, many of them after the mine owners sealed the mine shafts with concrete in order to choke the fire and save their property. Or the Monongah Disaster of 1907, when a whole West Virginia mine blew up in one great ball of fire and 400 miners died. Or the Fraterville Explosion of 1902 in which nearly 200 died. Or the Diamond Shaft Flood that took 70 lives, or the Cross Mountain Explosion that killed 84, or the Moweaqua Disaster that killed 54 in 1932. Or the even more recent explosion at Bartley, West Virginia, on January 10, 1940, when 91 miners died in the mine.

There are other things the coal miners will always remember: such as the Coal Creek Rebellion of 1891, when several thousand Tennessee miners and sympathizers waged open civil war against the iniquitous convict system, by which the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company filled its own money bags and starved the miners. Public opinion backed the latter and the system was later abolished, but not before many of the men had given their lives. Or the similar rebellion in 1898, more immediately successful but almost equally costly in lives, which forced the Chicago-Virden Coal Company to abandon a policy which was completely barbarous and inexcusable. Or the more famous Ludlow Massacre of 1913 when 20 strikers were literally butchered in a justified strike against Rockefeller mining interests in Colorado.

These are some of the things that soft-coal miners remember, some of the things that help make those California-Brownsville strikers so ornery, some of the things that have made it possible for the miner, when he is fighting for his union, to "endure hunger and privation," as Terence Powderly once said, "until the front wall of his stomach and his spinal column are about ready to lean against each other for support."

Mr. Korson's book contains some incredibly bad verse. But it more than gets by on the background material and

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background emotion it contributes to the understanding of a peculiar American phenomenon: the psychology of the soft-coal miner.

Story of a County

IN THE battle to save something of the FSA in a Congress gone amok against New Deal agencies, the big argument was that the small farmers aided by FSA had—and had already demonstrated—the greatest potential for increasing food production needed for war. And back of that undeniable contention was the conviction that the Farm Security type of rehabilitation is the soundest investment we can make in our rural areas in war or peace. Too bad Arthur Raper's "Tenants of the Almighty" was not yet published when the farm bloc trained its shotguns on the FSA. It is powerful evidence. It combines compelling documentation with a personal interest in people and communities that make statistics mean something in human terms.

During the past century and a half Greene County, Georgia, the subject of this story, has undergone an almost unbroken series of vicissitudes. Its one period of plenty lasted exactly four years (1917-20) when that grey-snouted beetle, the bollweevil, finally reached the county from other cotton fields and decimated the crop in its very first year. There has never since been a bumper crop.

As long as fifty years ago the Greensboro *Herald-Journal* pointed out that "the soil is yearly becoming thinner" and five years later quoted a Macon paper: "By our all-cotton system of farming, we of the South have killed the goose that layed the golden egg." But few listened. As crop after crop impoverished the soil, more and more guano had to be imported from Chile to keep the land producing. This expense made farmers sink deeper and deeper into debt. Topsoil washed away, erosion set in and the landscape was gutted with gullies. In the four short boom years Greene County and its citizens were able to undertake things they had neglected for decades, but that made the crash all the more catastrophic, debts that much more mountainous.

It wasn't that the people didn't fight. "They tried everything." Peanuts looked good the first year, but Dr. Carver's myriad uses for the goober were not yet known and the bottom soon dropped out of that market. Rabbits were next on the list but in less than five years disease laid them low, too. For five or six years the people sawed and sold all available standing timber and then that gave out. A few turned to bootlegging. Hopes rose for a while in a revived cattle industry focused on sweet milk and sour cream; but cattle diseases and low prices (without benefit of cooperative marketing) put a crimp in that. Things got so bad that many left the county. Only an agency with adequate resources and constructive ideas could set back on their feet those who were struggling so gamely to make their own way. In such situations the government has the duty to step in as a last resort.

FSA assistance there has reached into every field: education, housing, sanitation, public health, diversification of crops, canning, finance, cooperatives, soil reclamation and conservation, etc. It makes a thrilling story, although Greene County's racial and economic problems are far from solved. Yet how far these people—white and Negro, farmer and mill-hand, landowner and landless—have progressed in the past five years! Assets per family are $500 greater, while outright cost (unrecoverable) was only $65 per family. A superb series of FSA plates sets the tone for this deeply human story, informal, colorful and warmly personal throughout one hundred and fifty years of history. Enabling people to earn their own way is the most enlightened of social policies; with adequate appropriations FSA could repeat its achievements in Greene County on a scale that would remake America.

More Books of the Week

The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino. Paul Oscar Kristeller. Columbia. $4.50.

THE NAME of Aristotle is a household word in the history of medieval philosophy. Think, for example, what little of Plato the middle ages could read and how much, by contrast, it knew of Aristotle. That is why it is both an obstinate and a remarkable fact that the more we study the great figures of the middle ages, the more we meet the philosophical doctrines of Plato. In the main, medieval thinkers talked Aristotle and thought Plato. Now to talk Aristotle and to think Plato is certainly not to be anti-Platonic. Leave aside Saint Thomas Aquinas, and an anti-Platonic middle ages is very hard to find. Whether to be a vehicle for Platonism is a betrayal of Aristotle is, of course, a good question. In any case, even supposing that poor Aristotle is the most betrayed philosopher in history, it remains that those who characterize the middle ages as Aristotelian, whether for praise or for blame, or who distinguish sharply between the Aristotelianism of the middle ages and the Platonism of the Renaissance, are holding to a thesis which is becoming increasingly difficult to defend.

The Florentine Ficino (1433-1499), translator of Plato and Plotinus, assiduous believer in Platonism as the authentic philosophy of Christian thinkers, certainly knew more about the works of Plato than any medieval predecessor. We may even add that in a literary and scholarly sense, Ficino was a better student of Platonism than his elder contemporary, Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464). But it is still a fact that, by way of Proclus and Meister Eckhart, Nicolas had developed a philosophy which was superior to that of Ficino in its sophistication of the virtualities latent in Platonism.

The reason for recalling such generalities on the occasion of Professor Kristeller's interesting and scholarly book is that they are involved in the interpretation of Ficino. The author aims at a general exposition of the thought of the philosophical master of the Medici circle. Giving abundant quotations, the author presents Ficino's views on the nature of reality, the hierarchical structure of the universe and the inner world of the soul, which is its contemplative movement toward God. If Professor Kristeller can be said to have any thesis in this book, and he can, it is to stress the Christian and traditional aspects of Ficino's philosophical doctrines. Ficino lived in a world which had been shaped by Augustine, and certainly Ficino's central interest in God and the soul comes rather from Augustine than from Plato or Plotinus. Ficino's world had also been shaped by the Schoolmen, with their doctrines about *being, truth, knowledge, love, virtue,* etc. —a whole galaxy of ideas that were rich with two centuries of scholastic discussion and controversy.

But because the author himself insists on the importance of Augustine and the Schoolmen for the understanding of Ficino, he raises some question as to the exact

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status of this background in his interpretation of Ficino's philosophy. In fact, Ficino's medieval background is presented very vaguely, and where Professor Kristeller touches upon medieval doctrines his treatment is rather distant and often awkward. His keenest discussions occur when he relates Ficino to Plato or to Plotinus directly. Except, therefore, for asserting the medieval element in Ficino's thought, Professor Kristeller has not revealed very much about it. His medieval references are limited to a few passages from the *Contra Gentiles* of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Had Professor Kristeller considered the complexity of medieval thought a little more directly, he would have found it much less Aristotelian than he seems to suppose. The extraordinary character of the Avicennian Platonism of Henry of Ghent, of Saint Albert the Great, of John Duns Scotus and of Meister Eckhart has received much clarification in the last decade. These men had already taken long strides in the direction of harmonizing Platonic metaphysics with Christianity. Long before Ficino they had tried, for better or for worse, to make the sort of synthesis which Ficino has before his eyes. I think that Professor Kristeller is hindered from seeing this fact because the *name* of Aristotle is so prominent in these medieval efforts.

A case in point is the discussion of the idea of contemplation. There is a Platonic contemplation, and there is a Christian contemplation, and the two have absolutely nothing in common. When he handles this question, however, Professor Kristeller is not entirely aware that he is walking on very difficult and certainly well-trod territory. The interior lives of Christian contemplatives, from Gregory the Great to the Spanish Teresa, have nothing to do with the inner experiences of Platonic philosophers. The interior world that is built on charity and prayer should be sharply distinguished from the world—that attractive and unsubstantial world—that the Platonists have built within themselves with the tool of dialectic. When Ficino wrote that "the finger of dialectic" points out the way to contemplation, he was being deeply Platonic. The dialectical ascent to God—if it is an ascent, and if it is to God—is a Platonic journey known and practiced by medieval Platonists from Erigena to Cusa; but it is a complete stranger to the loving journey of a Saint Bernard or a Saint Bonaventure to God. Professor Kristeller could have analyzed the Platonic and the Christian elements in Ficino's theory of contemplation with greater precision. On this point he would have been helped considerably if he had taken into account the vagaries of medieval Platonism. Indeed, he would have found in several medieval models that strange and dangerous combination of Platonic dialectic and Christian contemplation which Ficino inherited from thinkers like the Pseudo-Dionysius, whom he translated, and Henry of Ghent to whom he pointed as a master of Platonism.

Professor Kristeller's book is so provocative that it will undoubtedly excite considerable discussion in the more professional reviews. It is the first book in English on the subject. Perhaps I should add that the book, like its author, has found refuge in this country. The manuscript was first written in German (1937). Then the work was translated into Italian (1938). It is from this Italian version that the present English translation was made by Miss Virginia Conant. Amidst the many tragedies of war, it is our happy fortune that so serious and thoughtful a book should appear in America. ANTON C. PEGIS.

"THE COMMON BURDEN"

"We will certainly suffer": "We can choose what kind of suffering we will have—whether it will be redeeming, reaching out to others, or whether it will be sterile. If we choose to live an exclusive life, to narrow our souls in a timid state of selfish soul-culture, we will certainly suffer. We will suffer particularly if there is a demand made upon us to give of ourselves, if we are threatened by the loss of one jot of that precious life we are so intent in saving for eternity, and our suffering—though even increasing, out of all proportion to the cause—will be absolutely fruitless.

"But if we choose to respond and say 'yes' to every one who wakes in us the spark that may burn to love, to say 'yes' to every experience that may make us understand human creatures better, our suffering will be big, and our capacity will grow big enough to include that divine thing, compassion, which word does literally mean sharing in The Passion."

—Quoted from Caryll Houselander's book: THIS WAR IS THE PASSION. Price $2.00.

"A successful theft from tomorrow": "Most of the activities of the modern world are a consumption of the 'capital' of the world: today's success is a successful theft from tomorrow. Thus our machinery means the inevitable and perhaps rapid dearth of the world's metals. A philosopher of history has lately reminded us never to forget that every modern war is a war for—oil! Iron and oil do not grow, as grow the ash and oak, and even the elm and alder.

"The things now used by man in his madness for bulk and speed are all exhaustible things. One day (thank heaven?) they will be no more. Therefore consider the lilies of the field—how they *grow*. Iron and copper and zinc and coal and oil do not grow—they only *grow less*. But alder and elm and ash and oak and cabbage and lettuce and potatoes and roses and the lilies of the field—*they grow*. They seem blessed by God with some share of His infinity and eternity."

—Quoted from Vincent McNabb's OLD PRINCIPLES AND THE NEW ORDER. Price $2.75.

They "took pity on the State": "'It is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order' says Pius XI 'for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy . . .' The unfortunate State, loaded down with all the burdens once borne by the now extinct associations, is groaning under 'an infinity of affairs and duties.'

"It is as if Father Tompkins and his fishermen took pity on the State that is so heavily laden . . . The people knew from the first that they had work to do . . . They knew also the basic principle of social philosophy: littler bodies, doing their work, need not be and ought never to be swallowed up by the general collectivity . . . In saving themselves these little bodies have done more to free and save the State than any statesman whom one can easily name in these times . . . And it may be noted in passing that the result has pleased the Popes . . ."

—Quoted from Leo Ward's NOVA SCOTIA: Land of Co-operators. Price $2.50.

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Order in the Court. John C. Knox. Scribner. $2.75.

IN THIS, the second volume of his court reminiscences, Judge Knox proceeds with the same bonhomie that characterized his previous collection to make us familiar with what goes on behind the scenes in our courts of law. When the court is his own, we may be certain that nothing untoward will occur. Quite unprejudiced in his private opinions (there is a suggestion of bias in his references to labor unions) we cannot concede him to be, but we feel that he can be relied on to uphold the best traditions of the bench. When he errs (to our feeling) the error is attributable to an excess of charity in his own disposition. Is he quite right in declaring that the vast majority of our lawyers are honest, highminded and worthy of our confidence? That has been his experience among those practicing in his own court, and if he is to generalize we would rather that he came to this conclusion than its opposite.

Is he right, again, in saying that American justice is, in his opinion, "at least the equal of the properly famed justice of Great Britain, and in some respects its superior"? That is hardly the common impression, and could be maintained, one would suppose, only by an argument akin to the one which finds a despotism tempered by assassination superior to the undiluted article, corruption being substituted in this case for assassination. We believe that most of our judges are honest (there are exceptions here and there), and that this, more particularly, is true of those who preside in the Federal courts, and perhaps this holds for the lawyers as well. Of the lower courts of Manhattan it may even be that something similar may be said—it would be venturesome to assert it of the tradition in the land. And there are still the myriads of cases where justice, owing to the cumbersomeness of its processes, misfires.

J. K. PAULDING.

New Frontiers in American Painting. Samuel M. Kootz. 89 Reproductions, 16 in Color. Hastings. $5.00.

Painters and Sculptors of Modern America. 108 *Reproductions, 4 in Color. Thomas Y. Crowell.* $5.00.

THE American loves his inventions. He will quickly discard a perfectly good car for one which is of a later model. And in literature he will be impressed by a writer like Dos Passos because, for a time at least, he seemed to come up with a fresh invention in each of his books. Now this attitude has invaded our painting, for Samuel M. Kootz, in "New Frontiers in American Art," has repeatedly, in a bare 63 pages of text, announced that technical fluency is the prime desideratum in art. Doing so, he writes with all the arrogance of an automobile salesman dismissing last year's model as old hat.

Somewhere in the distant ether he places Renoir and Cézanne as the two fixed stars in the modern firmament. He can find no Americans in his constellation "because nothing of importance now taking place can be attributed to such an ancestry." More nearly of our own day, Picasso, he states, is the great irritator and indicator of the modern *weltanschaung*. He has praise for Rouault and Matisse and he certainly upholds that specialist in mechanism, Fernand Léger. He acknowledges Marin as the pathfinder of his generation and in the men who immediately follow suggests such other commendable names as Charles Demuth and Marsden Hartley, along with a qualified admiration for Charles Sheeler, the photographer-painter. But these, the better-known names in the last twenty to thirty years, are but the background to the real contentions of Mr. Kootz's book.

He holds that, stemming from Picasso, we have a new realism in Abraham Rattner, Stuart Davis and Walter Quirt. Mr. Rattner, who has a deftness at combining older religious symbols with the latest fabrication of Paris, would here seem out of place, as his affiliations, until recently, were more largely with the French school. Stuart Davis, once a witty artificer in the wake of Picasso, is now credited with the "same technological equipment as Leger." His work, long familiar, scarcely acquaints us with any new frontiers. Nor does Quirt's, which too readily recalls Picabia, the surrealists and the others upon whom he has made emendations. Lesser frontier-locators, as listed by Mr. Kootz, are his so-called abstract and non-objective painters, each of whom, to the present writer, is all too recognizable as the direct offspring of some other modern. Last are his expressionists. Here his chief man is the eclectic Max Weber. Milton Avery, the uncentered personality, Paul Burlin, and Karl Knaths are also mentioned.

What is one to make of this listing? Very little. Just an anthology compounded from a metropolitan taste, and not too sensitive a one at that. A list of assertions, a critical text often shocking in its blatancy (with paintings termed "rude as hell"), and an insistency sometimes verging on the obtuse. For example, why deny Whistler's influence on the early Marin? And Marsden Hartley has often asseverated his debt to Ryder. Even Charles Sheeler had Chase as a teacher. Surely these American progenitors—though perhaps secondary in effect—have exercised a part in the contemporary effort. Such gaps in Mr. Kootz's argument are only indicative of many others. He is rather like a salesman than a critic, since he repeats a key-word—"technical"—and omits that search which alone can provide any critical frontiers worthy of the name.

A more modest volume, "Painters and Sculptors of Modern America," with an introduction by Monroe Wheeler, Director of the Department of Exhibitions, Museum of Modern Art, collects the credos of 28 living American contemporaries. That is, the artist speaks for himself. Little congruity is apparent, though certain of the contributions have value as documents. In the matter of reproductions, the honors go to Kootz. His color, as well as his black-and-white illustrations, are carefully and expertly handled. In this, at any rate, his book had the qualifications indispensable to a volume of criticism.

JEROME MELLQUIST.

Hungry Hill. Daphne du Maurier. Doubleday. $2.75.

WITH HER unerring eye for tale-worthy atmosphere, action and personality, Miss du Maurier has compounded her new novel of materials whose dramatic virtue she has proved before. Here, though somewhat subdued to the larger purposes of a dynastic study with socio-historical aspirations, are the exciting coincidences, the swift, retributive disasters, the violent antitheses which Miss du Maurier purveys with equal relish and skill. This time her main scene is a wild corner of Ireland, where Clonmere Castle, its tenant village, Doonhaven, and the black height of Hungry Hill above the Atlantic provide a just setting for the struggles that mark a hundred turbulent years.

The country is magnificent, undefeated; not so, the people. Though Miss du Maurier chooses the point of

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view of the prosperous Anglo-Irish landlords, she regards them with almost as little sympathy as she accords the debased tenants. As she sees the Brodricks, the Lumleys and the Flowers—interlopers in the judgment of the resentful poor, to whom the feuds of their fathers are about the only undying satisfaction in life—these provincial aristocrats are fated to one of two courses. They succumb to their own sporting, hard-drinking idleness and easy wealth, or in the name of progress they exploit the land and the people. Reckless of the natural beauty he is destroying and the human nature he antagonizes, Copper John Brodrick begins to mine the wealth of Hungry Hill. We follow the consequences of his enterprise through five generations, a succession of Johns and Henrys depicted in bold, simple strokes. As we should expect from their author, the wastrels, the romantics, the restless ones of the family engage her chief attention and ours; but the thoughtful ones interpret the hundred years between 1820 and the troubled time of 1920 with melancholy acumen.

OLIVE B. WHITE.

Shakespeare's Satire. Oscar James Campbell. Oxford. $3.75.

I HAVE ALWAYS felt that one of the minor joys of a better world would be to find fun in Shakespeare's low comedy. Professor Campbell is fortunate. He has so completely identified himself with the Elizabethan viewpoint that he not only catches the point of each faded pun or verbal sally, but quotes them with a gusto which seems completely genuine.

The average reader is apt to forget that during the Renaissance, satire still enjoyed its classic birthright and was a recognized form of moral propaganda. Such was the torrent of epigrams and poetic satires in sixteenth-century London that the ecclesiastic censor placed a ban on their somewhat muddied course and it was then that Ben Jonson projected satire onto the stage in "Every Man in . . ." and "Every Man Out of His Humor." Shakespeare had already satirized Sir Walter Raleigh's exclusive coteries of astronomers in "Love's Labour Lost" and the satirists themselves in the person of Jacques in "As You Like It," which professor Campbell thinks is a gay gibe at the current romantic comedy in which the simple life is caricatured in the earthy shepherds and Audrey. "Twelfth Night" features two well known satirical types, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the "gull" who apes his betters, and Malvolio who, like Jacques, is a pure "Humor" character. The sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic were the ancient categories for humors, or temperament, before psychology had its own vocabulary. A humor character was someone ridden by a folly, and if he could not be cured during the course of the comedy, then he must be driven off the stage in derision. To an Elizabethan audience the baiting of Malvolio was just and purgatory. Clowns were the progeny of the buffoon, vice, out of the old morality plays and were developed by Shakespeare into the jester, when Will Kemp, the comedian, was succeeded by Robert Armin.

Professor Campbell has already published a study of "Troilus and Cressida," which he claims to be Shakespeare's first serious attempt at "Comicall Satyre," as produced by Jonson and Marston. He contends that the only way to appreciate whatever good there is in this abortive drama is to accept it as formal satire on the folly of Achilles's selfishness and the lovers' lust. Certainly wanton was never described in fewer words than the

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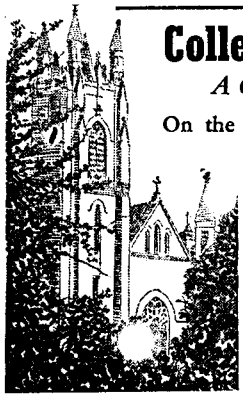

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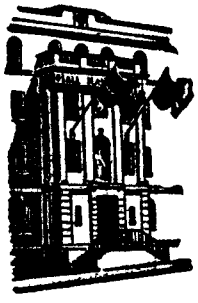

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famous: "There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip, Nay, her foot speaks." But even Professor Campbell finds "Troilus and Cressida" lethargic drama, and suggests that it may have been written for Inns of Court. "Measure for Measure" is satire for more popular consumption. Lust plus hypocrisy is also the focus for its attack, but instead of driving the characters off the stage as in "Troilus," a sop to the public is offered in the indiscriminate marriages of romantic comedy. The trouble with "Measure for Measure" as a satire is that Isabella steals the interest which should be centered on the unmasking of Angelo. The Duke has the classic part of commentator.

The author believes that Shakespeare also attempted "Tragicall Satyre" in "Timon of Athens" and "Coriolanus." No category can much improve "Timon," but "Coriolanus" does gain a certain stature when measured by the satiric ruler. Both the faults of the populace and an overbearing ruler are exposed. It is not a graceful play; the similes are mostly biological or malodorous. "The mutable rank-scented Many" is one of Coriolanus's milder descriptions of the Roman citizenry, and one of his best friends says of him that there is no more mercy in him than milk in a male tiger. With the man of choleric humor, anger was considered the direct concomitant of wounded pride. "Put him to choler straight," cries one of Coriolanus's enemies, "being once chafed, he cannot be ruled again to patience." And Coriolanus never disappoints them. Professor Campbell feels that a great weakness of Coriolanus is his subservience to his mother. On the contrary, I find in it his greatest virtue, but am inclined to consider Volumnia rather a satire on the fabled Roman matron. She is far more interested in her son's career than in checking his bad temper. When he turns traitor to Rome and marches on his native city, she goes out to meet him, not to denounce his perfidy, but to inveigle him into the compromise of a peace treaty. Thus Coriolanus loses even his friends among the Volscians, and his mother is actually responsible for his ignoble death at their hands. The lines that prove confusing to Professor Campbell's theory are those at the end, when the Volscian lords exclaim:

> Let him be regarded
> As the most noble corse that ever Herald
> Did follow to his Urn.
> He shall have a noble memory.

Professor Campbell disregards these lines and tries to prove that Menenius, the faithful and admiring Roman friend, is really supposed to be played as a buffoon.

In all events one must be grateful that Shakespeare wasted no more time on satires, either comical or tragical. Professor Campbell's scholarship has also the advantage of imagination. E. V. R. WYATT.

The Third Term Tradition. Charles W. Stein. Columbia. $3.75.

SOME may consider this as merely a "timely" book, dealing with the controversial matter of presidential tenure. Actually, it is possibly one of the best books of the year in American history. Jefferson, rather than Washington, is considered responsible for the inception of the "no third term" tradition. The attitudes of Grant, Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, Coolidge and Franklin D. Roosevelt are more carefully studied and analyzed than in any previous treatment of the theme. The book deserves a wide audience of intelligent readers, since it presents all the facts and allows everyone to draw his own conclusions on this far from dead issue. PAUL KINIERY.

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The Inner Forum

English Catholics on Housing

EVERYONE recognizes at least one good effect of the nazi bombing of English cities, and that is the wholesale leveling of certain slum areas. There is no question of slum clearance; the slums are cleared. To the equally important question of what shall replace the slums English Catholics have recently given a convincing, detailed answer in the report of the housing sub-committee of the Sword of the Spirit movement.

Because of their concern for the family as the basic unit of national and community life, Catholics must necessarily be concerned about the housing problem. For, as the English Catholic bishops put it in their joint pastoral of June, 1942, "Family life is attacked where housing conditions are bad." And they went on to add, "Slums should be abolished; there is no excuse for slums."

Starting from this premise, the report of the housing sub-committee, which was obviously drawn up by trained architects, proceeds to lay down a detailed plan for that type of housing that will best satisfy the requirements of Christian families. For example, they recommend that at least 5 percent of all houses and apartments constructed should be built for families of four or more children, that is, containing at least one living room, 3 double and 1 single bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and utility room.

Although separate houses are naturally preferred, it is recognized that city conditions more often demand the apartment house type. The report emphasizes, however, that the old days of airless, sunless, spaceless, treeless, playgroundless tenements must be no more. "Flats should, where possible, be planned in large blocks, surrounded by the maximum amount of open space with provision for such amenities as playgrounds, community centers, gardens and allotments. . . .

"While it is necessary to have a concrete playground for the children, there should also be grass, trees and some cultivated ground where it might be possible to teach the children to care for gardens. . . .

"The Community Center is an important part of flat life. It should have a good hall, a gymnasium, small rooms for club meetings, a workshop for the men, a room in which the women can meet for sewing and talk and a playroom for children. The Community Center provides endless possibilities for the development and enriching of life and intercourse, possibilities which should be taken into account by the Catholic thinker."

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